



DELAWARE

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PRESS RELEASE

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Barnstorming Neighborhoods to Promote Safety

Kent County – Residents from four Kent County neighborhoods joined Governor Ruth Ann Minner, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) Secretary Carolann Wicks, state elected officials, law enforcement, emergency responders and local officials on Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2008 in what was described as a barnstorming tour to promote safety.

The tour of neighborhoods was another initiative in support of DelDOT's statewide campaign to educate drivers about the dangers of speeding in neighborhood/residential areas. T-shirts and lawn signs with the campaign messages were handed out to attendees. The central message of the campaign is straightforward, and pulls no punches. Simply, a pedestrian hit at 20 mph has a five percent chance of dying, a pedestrian hit at 30 mph has a 45 percent chance of dying, and at 40 mph the chances of death are 85 percent. State law sets the speed limit in residential areas (and subdivisions) at 25 mph.

At the rally, speaking into a bull horn, Secretary Carolann Wicks said, "We are making this a day-long tour to get out and meet residents, enlist their support for this important campaign, and continue to spread the message. We launched this campaign to wake people up, but we can't do it alone so we need every person to warn their neighbors, their co-workers, their family and their friends about the deadly consequences of speeding."

Gov. Ruth Ann Minner said, "We have worked diligently over the past seven years to ensure that our roadways are safe for all of our residents and visitors, and this campaign is just another way of reinforcing the importance of safe driving statewide. I applaud our residents for taking such an interest in this campaign and working with DelDOT and our law enforcement agencies to spread the word."

The tour began in Dover in the Crossgates/Mayfair/Woodgate area on Kesselring Ave., then moved to the Towne Pointe/White Oak area on Townsend Blvd., followed by the Woodview at Sheffield area off Denneys Road, north of Dover. The final stop was in Smyrna at Greens Branch Lane and Providence Drive.

Janice Sibbald, President of the Crossgates/Mayfair Civic Association in Dover said, "This is an excellent program and it's time to get the word out that there are a great deal of people walking and children playing in neighborhoods. Especially with school starting soon, more children will be on the roads. Everyone should feel safe and this program keeps us all safer."

Jamie Cohee, a resident of Woodview at Sheffield, north of Dover, said, "This is an issue I'm pleased to partner with DelDOT on because I've seen the near misses myself in my own neighborhood. It started when I saw one of my neighbor's children riding their bicycle out of their driveway and almost got hit by a driver in a car racing by."

Smyrna Police Chief Richard Baldwin announced his officers will place special emphasis on enforcement of speeding in residential communities until school starts. "The message we are partnering with DelDOT on is very important to the

safety of all our children. Don't let a small mistake result in a fatality. Drive 25 mph and give our children a chance to survive."

Daniel Semenick, President of the School House Village Homeowners Association in Smyrna stated, "Our community experiences high volumes of both vehicle and pedestrian traffic. Providing the safest environment for our children and the children of surrounding communities as they play and walk to school is of the highest priority. The awareness campaigns such as the '25 not 35' program are a great benefit to community safety. We appreciate the effort DelDOT is making."

Others joining residents at the locations were state Senator Bruce Ennis, state representatives Bill Carson, Donna Stone and Nancy Wagner; Kent County Levy Court member W.G. Edmanson, Dover Mayor Carleton Carey, Smyrna School District Superintendent Deborah Wicks, Dover Councilman Gene Ruane, Smyrna Vice Mayor Bill Pressley, Smyrna Police Chief Richard Baldwin, Kent County Paramedic Richard Allen, Joann Didonato, Captain, American Legion Ambulance Service in Smyrna, the Dover Police Department and Delaware State Police.

Secretary Wicks hopes that the neighborhood speeding campaign will prevent a neighborhood fatality.

In 2007, DelDOT's Traffic Studies staff received close to 100 requests and complaints about speeding within neighborhoods. The requests ranged from lowering speed limits to installing unwarranted stops signs. In addition, DelDOT's Traffic Division has one member of its staff who works full time on residential traffic calming projects, which are aimed at mitigating speeding in neighborhoods. This staff member worked with 60 communities statewide in 2007, and is currently working with 25 more this year. In 2007, in just New Castle County alone, 61 speed humps were installed or replaced at a cost of just under \$150,000.

The neighborhood speeding campaign will continue to be the focus of radio advertising, billboards, DART bus advertising and in other ways.

To assist neighborhoods with educating their neighbors, DelDOT is offering informational materials they may hand out, a limited amount of T-shirts and a limited amount of lawn signs. All the materials include the educational message.

The Neighborhood Speeding Education Campaign is the second of a three-part education campaign that began in March 2008. The first phase was Work Zone Safety. The final component is expected to be pedestrian education. This three-pronged education effort is being funded with approximately \$500,000 in new federal money that may be used for education purposes. DelDOT's target areas were identified in a September 2006 [Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#), a cooperative multi-agency plan for improving safety and reducing fatalities on Delaware's highways. The goals of this campaign are to save lives, for motorists, pedestrians and the men and women who work at and for DelDOT. RT&E Integrated Communications of Wilmington is working with DelDOT on the campaign.

Statistics of Note:

- Pedestrians ages 0-14 in crashes, by county, 2007:
 - New Castle, 45 injuries, 3 fatalities.
 - Kent County, 7 injuries.
 - Sussex County, 8 injuries.
- If you hit a pedestrian:
 - At 20 mph 5% will die
 - At 30 mph 45% will die
 - At 40 mph 85% will die
- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children of every age from 2-14 years of age
- Speeding in residential neighborhoods represents the single greatest complaint issued to police departments and city council representatives throughout the U.S.
- Most speeders in your neighborhood live in the neighborhood.
- The death rate per million miles driven on residential streets is almost **3 times** the death rate on highways.
- 48 percent of Delaware's total fatal crashes included aggressive driving behaviors.
 - Failure to yield right-of-way and speeding represented the highest contributors at 29 percent and 26 percent of all aggressive driving crashes.

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